

Appl'n No: 10/517,955
Amdt dated January 3, 2007
Reply to Office action of September 27, 2006

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement sheet of drawings, including Figures 1 and 2, replaces the previously submitted sheet of drawings including Figures 1 and 2. More specifically, Applicants have amended Figures 1 and 2. The replacement sheet has been clearly labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header.

Attachment: 1 Replacement Sheet of drawings including Figures 1 and 2

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 5, and 7 remain in the application. New Claims 8-15 have been added. Claims 2, 3, and 6 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 4, 5, and 7 have been amended. Claims 1 and 12 are in independent form.

Drawings

Applicants have attached 1 replacement sheet of drawings hereto directly following these Remarks. The replacement sheet has been labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header as per 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d).

In amended Figure 1, element 17 has been added to correspond with the description in the amended specification.

In amended Figure 2, element 35 has been added to correspond with the description in the amended specification.

Specification

2-3. The Examiner has objected to the abstract of the disclosure in the specification because of the use of the word "means." In response, Applicants have submitted a new abstract of the disclosure. Applicants have also instructed the Examiner to cancel the previously submitted abstract of the disclosure.

4. The Examiner has objected to the specification because of the recitation of "according to claim 1" at page 4, line 25. In response, Applicants have amended the specification by replacing "according to claim 1" with a summary of the invention at the appropriate location.

5. The Examiner has objected to the specification because of the recitation of "teeth 24, 26" at page 8, line 12. In response, Applicants have replaced "teeth 24, 26" with "teeth 25, 26" as suggested by the Examiner.

The specification has been further amended to clarify terminology set forth in the application as filed. Applicants attest that no new matter has been added thereto.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Claim Objections

6. The Examiner has objected to claim 1 because of the recitation of "in the area of interaction" at line 22. In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 by replacing "in the area of interaction" with "in an area of interaction" as suggested by the Examiner.

7. The Examiner has objected to claims 5-7 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from any other multiple dependent claim. In response, Applicants have cancelled claim 6 and amended claims 5 and 7 to be in dependent form rather than multiple dependent form.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to claims 1, and 5-7 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

8-9. Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent 3,848,911 to Watermann et al. ("the '911 reference") in view of U.S. Patent 3,997,202 to Tack et al. ("the '202 reference"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The '911 reference discloses a motor-vehicle latch including a housing 1 having a laterally open notch 11 for receiving a bolt 12 secured to a door post 30 when the door is closed. The bolt 12 includes a bolt head 18. An elastomeric rear or back cushion 17 is provided at the

base of the notch 11 so that when the door is closed the bolt head 18 comes to rest against the cushion 17.

The '202 reference discloses a door-lock assembly including a body having lower 13 and upper 14 cheeks defining a wedge-receiving pocket 16 for receiving a locking wedge A. The lower cheek 13 is centrally recessed to accommodate an elastic buffer 31 overlain by a metallic yoke 30 whose lower ends have lugs 30a holding it in position within the recess. The yoke 30 projects slightly above the upper surface of the lower cheek 13 to bear upon a lower edge 32a of plate 32 of the locking wedge A for more positive guidance as the plate 32 slides along the cheek 13.

Applicants respectfully suggest that there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation in either of the cited references for the disclosure set forth in amended claim 1 of the above-captioned application. Further, Applicants respectfully maintain that the combination of the '911 reference and the '202 reference would not result in a disclosure of the invention as set forth in amended claim 1 of the above-captioned application.

Claim 1 of the above-captioned application, as amended, claims a rigid protective shield covering the second end of the buffer in an area of interaction with the engagement portion of the lock striker for evenly distributing the impact of the lock striker over the second end wherein the shield is securely retained on the second end of the buffer by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges of the shield around the buffer. The '202 reference does not disclose a protective shield securely retained on the second end of the buffer by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges of the shield around the buffer. In the '202 reference, the buffer 31 is overlain by the metallic yoke 30 whose lower ends have outwardly extending lugs 30a holding the buffer 31 and yoke 30 in position within the recess. The buffer 31 and metallic yoke 30 are separate pieces, which are separately assembled onto or into the door-lock assembly. First, the elastic buffer 31 is inserted into the recess in the lower cheek 13 of the door-lock body. Second, the metallic yoke 30 is placed over the buffer 31 with the lugs 30a disposed in pockets within the recess to retain the buffer 31 and yoke 30 therein. Clearly, *the yoke 30 is not securely retained on the second end of the buffer 31 by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges of the yoke 30 around*

the buffer 31, as is specifically required by amended claim 1 of the above-captioned application. Further, providing *the buffer* with the protective shield securely retained to the second end by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges of the shield around the buffer, as set forth in amended claim 1 of the above-captioned application, would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art in view of the cited references at the time of invention. Neither of the cited references contemplates securely retaining the shield to the buffer by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges of the shield around the buffer, such that the buffer and shield are a one-piece component.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of independent claim 1, and claims 2-4 depending therefrom, as being unpatentable over the '911 reference in view of the '202 reference be withdrawn.

New claim 8 of the above-captioned application, depending from claim 1, claims a projection extending from the first end of the buffer disposed in a recess formed in the bottom wall of the housing seat coupling the buffer to the bottom wall. Applicants respectfully suggest that there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation in either of the cited references for the disclosure set forth in new claim 8 of the above-captioned application. Further, Applicants respectfully maintain that the combination of the '911 reference and the '202 reference would not result in a disclosure of the invention as set forth in new claim 8 of the above-captioned application.

New independent claim 12 of the above-captioned application, claims a lock for a door including a closure mechanism adapted for coupling with a lock striker along a direction of relative coupling; a supporting body of the closing mechanism including an opening for receiving a lock striker therein, the opening including a pair of opposing side walls extending between an entry area and an opposite bottom wall orthogonal to the direction of relative coupling; an elastically compliant buffer including a first end coupled to the bottom wall by a projection extending from the first end and having opposite lateral edges converging with respect to one another toward the first end and disposed in a recess formed in the bottom wall, opposite lateral surfaces bearing upon the side walls, a second end having a concave surface for receiving an impact from an engagement portion of the lock striker and delimiting the

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opening in the direction of relative coupling in order to define damped arrest of the lock striker, and a slot disposed between the first end and the second end and extending transversely to the side walls; and a rigid protective shield covering the second end of the buffer in an area of interaction with the engagement portion of the lock striker for evenly distributing the impact of the lock striker over the second end wherein the shield is securely retained on the second end of the buffer by snap-fitting opposite lateral edges of the shield around the buffer. Applicants respectfully suggest that there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation in either of the cited references for the disclosure set forth in new independent claim 12 of the above-captioned application. Further, Applicants respectfully maintain that the combination of the '911 reference and the '202 reference would not result in a disclosure of the invention as set forth in new independent claim 12 of the above-captioned application.

It is respectfully submitted that this patent application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment or the patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee associated with this Communication to Deposit Account No. 50-1759. A duplicate of this form is attached.

Respectfully submitted,



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